

SWAVESEY
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1903,

BY

BUSHELL ANNINGSON, M.D., M.A.

University Lecturer in Medical Jurisprudence ;

Late University Examiner in State Medicine ;

*Fellow and Member of the Council and Late Member of the Board
of Examiners' Sanitary Institute ;*

Fellow and Member of the Council Royal Inst. Pub. Health ;

For Assoc. Mem. Soc. Française d'Hygiène ;

*Associate King's College, London, Assist, Examiner Science
and Art Department, S. Kensington, &c., &c.*

Medical Officer of Health.

Saint Ives

H. G. PARKER, PRINTER, STATIONER, &c.,

1904.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b30152185>

SWAVESEY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report.

I beg leave to communicate to the Swavesey Rural District Council my Annual Report for the year 1903 on “the conditions affecting health in the District and . . . the means for improving those conditions,” and in addressing myself to this task I have to point out to the Council that by the “Memorandum as to Annual Reports of Medical Officers of Health,” issued by the Local Government Board, October 1903, I am directed to discuss prescribed subjects in definite order, and give information which may seem superfluous to the Council. The following extract from the Memorandum will make clear the intention of the Local Government Board :—

“As subjects concerning which the Board desire to obtain through Annual Reports of the Medical Officer of Health, not only definite general information, but record also of particular changes of condition that may have occurred incidentally or by action of the local authority, the following deserve to be especially borne in mind :—

“Physical features and general character of the District.

“House accommodation, especially for the working classes ; its adequacy and fitness for habitation. Sufficiency of open space about houses, and cleanliness of surroundings. Supervision over erection of new houses.

“Sewerage and Drainage : its sufficiency in all parts of the District. Condition of sewers and house drains. Method or methods of disposal of sewage. Localities where improvements are needed.

“Excrement disposal : system in vogue ; defects, if any.

- “Removal and disposal of house refuse—whether by public scavenger or occupiers : frequency and method.
- “Water supply of the District or its several parts : its source (from public service or otherwise), nature (river water, well water, upland water, etc.), sufficiency, wholesomeness, and freedom (by special treatment or otherwise) from risks of pollution.
- “Places over which the Council have supervision, *e.g.*, lodging houses, slaughterhouses, bakehouses, dairies, cowsheds, and milkshops, factories and workshops, and offensive trades.
- “Nuisances : proceedings for their abatement—any remaining unabated.
- “Methods of dealing with infectious diseases : notification ; isolation hospital accommodation and its sufficiency ; disinfection.
- “With regard to such points it should be remembered that these reports are for the information of the Board and of the County Council as well as of the Council of the District, and that a statement of the local circumstances and a history of local sanitary questions, which may seem superfluous for the latter, may often be needed by the former bodies.”

VITAL STATISTICS.

Vital Statistics.
Population.

Inasmuch as a decrease in the population is governed by emigration rather than by the relation of birth-rate and death-rate as is the natural increase there is no certain factor by which the population can be estimated and as there is no reason to suppose there is sufficient material alteration to vitiate the substantial accuracy of statistical calculations based upon the results of the enumeration of the population at the Census of 1901, I use these figures as the basis of calculations of vital statistics which are as follows :—

Deaths and
Death Rate.

The total number of deaths registered is 41. To this number must be added 2 which occurred in the Union Workhouse, and 1 in Addenbrooke's Hospital of persons belonging to the district. The corrected number is 44 (21 males and 23 females), equal to a death-rate from all diseases of 17·8 per thousand living per annum, and is the highest rate recorded since the year 1895, with the exception of that for the year 1899. The rate for the previous year was 15·0. The death rate in England and Wales for the year 1903 is given as 15·4 in the summary of the Registrar General contained in the appendix to his report for the last

quarter of the year and is the lowest rate on record.

Deaths in the group of epidemic diseases in the district have been from Whooping Cough 2 ; equal to a death rate from these diseases of 0·81 per thousand living per annum.

Epidemic
Death Rate

Influenza caused no deaths.

Influenza.

The total number of births registered is 38, equal to a birth-rate of 15·4 per thousand living per annum. This is the lowest rate recorded since the constitution of the district. The rate for the previous year was 24·7. The birth-rate in England and Wales for the year 1903 is given as 28·4, which is 0·2 per 1000 below the rate in 1902 and lower than the rate in any year on record.

Births and
Birth Rate.

Infantile mortality as represented by the ratio of deaths of children under one year of age to 1000 registered births, is 131. The rate for the previous year was 16 per 1000.

Infantile
Mortality.

The total deaths and annual death-rate for this Registration sub-district, after distribution of deaths in public institutions are as follows :—

SUB-DISTRICT.	Register'd Deaths.	Share of Work-house.	Adden-brooke's Hospital.	Cambs. Asyl um.	Corrected Totals	Death Rate
Swavesey	41	2	1	...	44	17·9

It will be observed that the birth-rate is 2·4 per 1000 lower than the death-rate, but in so small a community where a small increase or decrease produces a large difference in the respective rates it is impossible to draw any conclusion as to the operating causes for so short a period as one year.

The number of deaths from Phthisis among persons belonging to the district is 3 ; the death-rate from this disease is 1·21 per thousand.

Phthisis.

The number of deaths due to Cancer among persons belonging to the district is 6 ; the death-rate from this disease is 2·43 per thousand.

Cancer.

The following Table shows the deaths and death-rate from Phthisis and Cancer respectively among persons belonging to the district during the eight years 1895-1902.

	PHTHISIS.		CANCER.	
	Deaths.	Death-rate.	Deaths.	Death-rate.
1895.	3	1·09	1	0·36
1896.	1	0·37	6	2·22
1897.	5	1·88	2	0·75
1898.	6	2·29	6	2·29
1899.	3	1·17	6	2·34
1900.	4	1·59	3	1·19
1901.	4	1·62	1	0·40
1902.	3	1·21	3	1·21
Average for years 1895-1902.	3·6	1·39	3·5	1·35

The number of deaths due to diseases of the respiratory organs is about half that of previous year.

DISEASE INCIDENCE.

- Disease Incidence.

Diseases of an epidemic character have been less prevalent than during the previous year.
- Small Pox.

No case of Small Pox has occurred in the district during the year.
- Scarlet Fever.

Only two cases of Scarlet Fever have been notified in the district during the year ; the first at Over on February 4 was with little doubt contracted at school in Cambridge ; the second occurred at Boxworth on September 3, but enquiry failed to elicit any definite source of infection.
- Diphtheria.

No case of Diphtheria has occurred in the district during the year, but a case at Swavesey was notified as Membraneous Croup on April 26, could not be accounted for.
- Typhoid Fever.

With regard to Typhoid Fever, only one case was notified in the district during the year, and that occurred on September 7th at Swavesey. It would appear that there had been a family from London visiting at the house, but enquiry failed to connect the case with any member of this family ; on the other hand the sanitary conditions were exceedingly bad, and I called the Inspector's attention to the circumstances.

Other epidemic but non-notifiable diseases present in the district during the early part of the year were—Whooping Cough at Boxworth and Connington during January and February, and Mumps at Connington during May.

PHYSICAL FEATURES AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT.

The Rural District of Swavesey comprises six villages, which vary in altitude above ordnance datum from 18 feet at Swavesey to 124 feet at Lolworth. Several of the villages rest on the Old River Gravels overlying Oxford and Kimeridge Clay, notably Swavesey, from which the water supply of the village is obtained ; this village is liable to floods owing to the backing up of the waters of the Ouse.

Physical
Features.

The manufacture of milk cheeses, and the exportation of milk is an important industry in the district ; but the larger number of the inhabitants are engaged in agricultural pursuits.

HOUSE ACCOMMODATION.

The house accommodation in the district, especially for the working classes, is generally adequate and is chiefly of the old-fashioned thatched type, but not therefore on that account insalubrious, for the thatched cottage if in good repair and with cleanly surroundings, is generally more comfortable and healthy a dwelling than its brick and slate substitute. The sufficiency of open space about houses, except in a few instances, is adequate, and the cleanliness of the surroundings varies according to the character of the inhabitants. In some of the villages a few of the houses are, however, badly and unhealthily situated.

House
Accommodation

No case of overcrowding has been reported during the year.

There is no official supervision over the erection of new houses, but in every instance a water certificate, under the provisions of Sec. 6 of the Public Health (Water) Act, 1878, is required before occupancy.

It is worth consideration of the Council whether they should take advantage of the provisions of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, of 1900 and 1903, which amend the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, for the better housing of the rural population.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

Sewerage and
Drainage.

There is no system of sewerage in the district, but at Swavesey the surface drains are sewerized and discharge into an open ditch which crosses the main street, and thence to the river ; the sewage passes away fairly quickly through the village, but stagnates near Church End, and occasionally becomes very offensive.

EXCREMENT DISPOSAL.

Excrement
Disposal.

Excrement disposal is chiefly by privy pits, and in a few instances by trough or pail closets ; the pit privies are being gradually abolished in favour of the above-mentioned type. The faecal matter is disposed of on garden ground.

REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL OF HOUSE REFUSE.

Removal of
Refuse.

The house refuse is disposed of by the occupiers, temporarily in ashpits, and subsequently on garden ground or allotments. It might be worth while for the Council to consider whether systematic scavengering might not be instituted in the larger villages in the district.

WATER SUPPLY.

Water Supply.

The villages in the district obtain their supply chiefly from shallow wells and ponds. At Church End, Swavesey, the supply is mainly from private wells, but Middle Watch and Boxworth End are supplied by public pumps on the roadside ; the well resevoirs connected therewith are supplied from a large gravel patch at Black Horse Lane by earthenware socketted pipes through which the water flows by gravitation. The water supply at the extreme end of the village frequently fails either from subsidence of the water level in the gravel in time of drought, or by blocking by ingrowths of tree roots which gain access through the clay joints.

The recurring blockage of the water-mains has again engaged the attention of the Local Authority on account of the failure of the water to reach the well reservoirs at Middle Watch and Boxworth End. An exploration revealed that the stoppage had had been again caused by the ingrowth of tree rootlets through the clay caulking of the glazed earthenware pipes. It having been stated that after a rainfall water was found in the well

reservoirs which had apparently not been supplied by the mains, I instituted some tests to verify the statement, but with a negative result ; nevertheless, I am inclined to think there is much truth in the statement, as the water in these reservoirs was turbid and therefore of a different character from water in the well reservoirs nearer the source of supply. I have, on former occasions, recommended that either iron pipes should be employed or that the present pipes should be caulked with cement instead of clay. The necessity for some such radical alteration in the system was recognised by the Parish Council, as will be seen by the following resolution adopted at a meeting of that body, held on the 21st April, 1903 :—

“ It was resolved that the District Council be asked to take into consideration the failure of the water supply at Middle Watch and Boxworth End, and that the Parish Council consider that iron pipes passing all the trees are necessary to prevent the ingrowth of tree roots, and they also approve of iron pipes being placed in the drain, wherever the future excavations take place, with stop taps at various places along the drain, and that the present stop-tap near the Turnbridge be examined ; and further, that the surface-water drain from No. 3 pump to the pond be removed to guard against such surface water getting into No. 3 well as it appears to do after a heavy rain.”

In all the exposed pipes cement was substituted for the clay caulking, and up to the end of the year no further trouble has occurred.

Owing to the increased rainfall during the year the surface wells in all the villages have been abundantly supplied, and no supplementary service has therefore been necessary, as has been required during previous years.

Parish Pumps have been repaired at Boxworth 1, Connington 1, Fendrayton 1, Lolworth 1, Over 2, Swavesey 3.

PLACES OVER WHICH THE COUNCIL HAVE SUPERVISION.

No systematic inspection of Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops, has been attempted under the Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Order, although Regulations under this Order have been in force in the District since 1st January, 1900. Considering the importance of the dairy industry in the district, it would be

Inspections.

desirable if some arrangements could be made for the inspection of these premises.

Slaughterhouses are periodically inspected by the Inspector of Nuisances.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Factories and
Workshops.

The Factories and Workshops Acts, 1901, which came into force on January 1st, 1902, imposes several new and important powers and duties on the District Council.

There are no non-textile factories in the district where more than forty persons are employed.

All the workshops in the District have been visited either by the Inspector of Nuisances or his deputy with regard to the points mentioned in the Memorandum as to Annual Reports of the Medical Officers of Health dated October, 1903, and where defects have been discovered they have been remedied.

A register of the workshops in the district has been compiled

NUISANCES.

Nuisances.

Nuisances of various kinds as indicated in the Inspector's Table in the appendix to this report, have been dealt with.

METHODS OF DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Isolation
Hospital, etc.

The methods of dealing with Infectious Diseases are by notification followed with enquiry by the Medical Officer of Health, Inspector of Nuisances, or by both, according to the importance of the cases.

There is no isolation hospital; advice is therefore given to householders to carry out isolation of cases in their own homes as far as practicable. The School Authorities are informed of the households in which Infectious Diseases have appeared, with a request to exclude all the members until they are free from infection; but where epidemic influence shows a tendency to spread, the schools are asked to be closed. In this regard in consequence of the prevalence of Whooping Cough at Boxworth, and Whooping Cough and Mumps at Connington the schools were closed for several weeks.

In threatened outbreaks of Diphtheria prophylactic doses of Antitoxin are recommended for the protection of all persons known to have been exposed to the chances of infection, and bacterial examination of rubbings from the throats and nasal passages of all known "Contacts" is recommended for the discovery of any unsuspected case of the disease.

At the conclusion of a case, the infected rooms and the articles contained therein are disinfected by aerial disinfectants, but there is no machinery in the district for disinfection by heat or steam.

ADOPTIVE ACTS.

The Infectious Disease (Prevention) Act, 1890, and the Public Health Acts (Amendment Act), 1890, have not yet been adopted. Adoptive Acts.

All the above remarks, together with the Tables of Statistics required by the Local Government Board, and the Inspector's Record of Work, I respectfully submit for the consideration of the Rural District Council.

BUSHELL ANNINGSON.

INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

For the Swavesey Rural District Council

OF THE SANITARY WORK COMPLETED IN THE YEAR 1903.

Complaints received during the year	...	...	...	52
Houses, Premises, &c., Inspected	...	...	...	99
Re-Inspection of Houses, Premises, &c.	...	...	...	50
Cases of Overcrowding reported and abated	...	...	...	0
Dilapidated houses reported	...	...	...	0
Dwellings Disinfected after illness of an infectious character				3
House Drains repaired, cleansed, trapped, &c.	...	...	...	19
Privies, &c., cleaned and repaired	...	...	...	16
Cesspools cleaned out	...	...	...	8
Offensive Ditches cleaned	...	...	...	4
Unwholesome Waters, &c.	...	...	...	0
Accumulation of Dung, Stagnant Water, Animal and other refuse removed	...	...	...	12
Swine Nuisances abated	...	...	...	2
Parish Pumps repaired	...	...	...	9
Parish ponds cleaned out	...	...	...	0

(Signed),

J. ARCHER,

Inspector.

TABLE I.
For the the SWAVESEY RURAL DISTRICT.
 Table showing Vital Statistics for the year 1903, and the antecedent
 eight years.

YEAR.	Population—Estimated to the middle of the year.	BIRTHS.		TOTAL DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT.				TOTAL DEATHS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE DISTRICT.	Deaths of Non-residents registered in Public Institutions in the District.	Deaths of Residents registered in Public Institutions beyond the District.	NETT DEATHS AT ALL AGES BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT.	
				UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE		AT ALL AGES.					Number.	Rate.*
		Number.	Rate.*	Number.	Rate per 1000 Births registered.	Number.	Rate.*					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1895.. ..	2747	66	24·0	12	182	42	15·2	..	..	2	44	16·0
1896.. ..	2700	55	20·3	4	73	33	12·2	..	..	7	40	14·8
1897.. ..	2654	47	17·7	4	85	26	9·8	..	..	3	29	10·9
1898.. ..	2611	55	21·0	7	127	44	16·9	..	..	2	46	17·6
1899.. ..	2561	55	21·4	6	109	42	16·4	..	..	4	46	17·9
1900.. ..	2504	46	18·3	7	152	39	15·5	..	..	5	44	17·5
1901.. ..	2468	43	17·4	4	93	32	12·9	..	..	7	39	15·8
1902.. ..	2468	61	24·7	1	16	34	13·7	..	..	3	37	15·0
Averages for years 1895—1902..	2589	53	20·4	5	94	36	13·9	..	..	4	40	15·4
1903.....	2468	38	15·4	5	131	41	16·6	..	..	3	44	17·8

* Rates calculated at per 1000 of estimated population.

NOTE—The deaths included in Column 7 of this table are the whole of those registered during the year as having actually occurred within the district or division. The deaths included in Column 12 are the number in Column 7, corrected by the subtraction of the number in Column 10 and the addition of the number in Column 11.

By the term “Non-residents” is meant persons brought into the district on account of sickness or infirmity and dying in Public Institutions there; and by the term “Residents” is meant persons who have been taken out of the district on account of sickness or infirmity and have died in Public Institutions elsewhere.

The Public Institutions taken into account for the purpose of this and the following tables are the Union Workhouse, Hemingford Grey, and Addenbrooke’s Hospital, Cambridge.

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water).....14,397.

Total population at all ages	2468	} At Census of 1901.
Number of inhabited houses	643	
Average number of persons per house.....	3.8	

TABLE II. is ommited by the direction of the Local Govern-
ment Board as needless for small and undivided Districts.

III. TABLE
SWAVESEY RURAL DISTRICT.
Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the year.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	Cases Notified in Whole District.						
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.					
		Under 1.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 and upwards
Smallpox	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cholera	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diphtheria	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Membranous Croup	1	..	1	..	..	..	..
Erysipelas	1	..	..	..	..	..	1
Scarlet Fever	2	..	..	2	..	..	..
Typhus Fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Enteric Fever	1	..	..	..	..	1	..
Relapsing Fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Continued Fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Puerperal Fever	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Plagúe	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Totals	5	..	1	2	..	1	1

NOTE—There is no Hospital for the isolation of cases of
infectious disease.

Causes of Death at several age periods during the year 1903.

See Notes on next page.

NOTES.

- (a) In this Table all deaths of "Residents" occurring in public institutions whether within or without the district, are included with the other deaths in the columns for the several age groups (columns 2-8).
- (b) See notes on Tables I. as to the meaning of "Residents" and "Non-Residents," and as to the "Public Institutions" taken into account for the purposes of these Tables.
- c) Under the heading of "Diarrhœa" are included deaths certified as from diarrhœa, alone or in combination with some other cause of ill-defined nature; and also deaths certified as from—
- Epidemic enteritis;
 - Zymotic enteritis;
 - Epidemic diarrhœa. Summer diarrhœa.
 - Dysentery and dysenteric diarrhœa.
 - Choleraic diarrhœa, cholera, cholera nostras (in the absence of Asiatic cholera),

Under the heading of "Enteritis" are included those certified as from Gastro-enteritis. Muco-enteritis, and Gastric Catarrh, unless from information obtained by enquiry from the certifying practitioner or otherwise, the Medical Officer of Health has reason for including such deaths, especially those of infants, under the specific term "Diarrhœa." Under the headings of "Puerperal Fever," "Phthisis" and "Cancer" are included all registered deaths from causes comprised within these general terms.

Deaths from diarrhœa secondary to some other well-defined disease are included under the latter.